by Yamakawa Naoto

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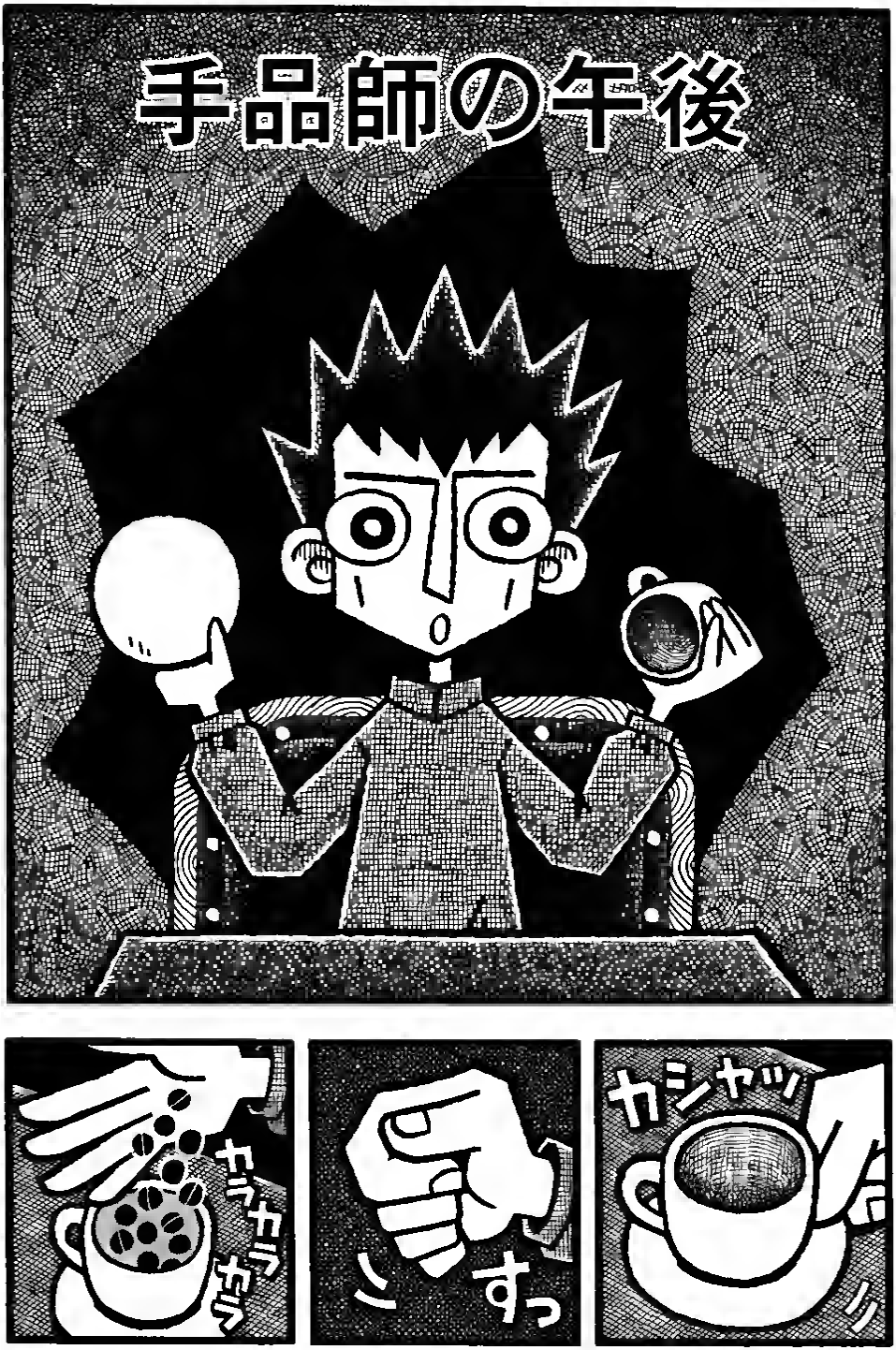

手品師の午後
カシャッ
ノ
すっ
ノ
カラカラカラ

すぅ〜
NOW THEN, YOUR NAME AND BIRTH DATE...
喫茶ノロエ
喫茶ノロエ
OPEN
AH!!
YOUR ORDER, MISS.
すぅ

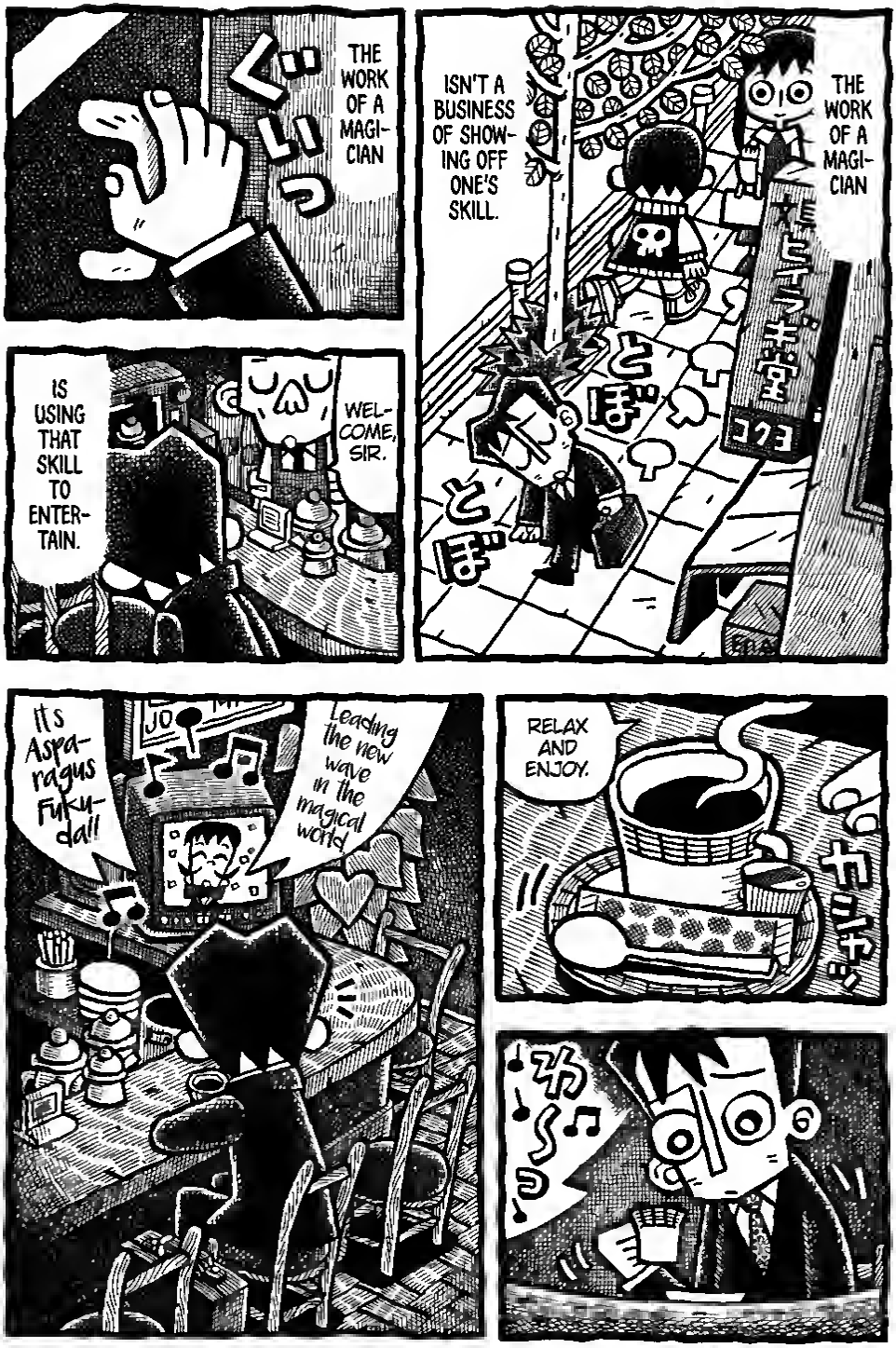
I'VE LOVED MAGIC SHOWS.
EVER SINCE I WAS A KID,
ボワ
わ～
パチパチっ
AND I EVEN MIMICKED WHAT I SAW.
わぉ
AND HIRED A PROFES-SIONAL MAGICIAN.
THEN THE COMPANY I WORKED FOR HELD A PARTY
?
YEP!
HEY, HEY! Y'KNOW, THERE'S A MAGICIAN WHO WORKS RIGHT HERE!
わ～パチパチ
ぱっ

I'D LOVE TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO.
MY, OH MY!
FU-NAKI-SAN!
FU-NAKI-SAN!
すっ
ぱっ
すっ
OH MY!!
WOW!!

NOT MANY AT ALL CAN CLAIM SUCH TALENT, MY BROTHER.
YOU'RE A KINDRED SPIRIT!
HOW WONDERFUL!
THE REASON A PRO PRAISED ME SO PROFUSELY WAS LIKELY BECAUSE
I DIN'T IN FACT HAVE MUCH TALENT AT ALL.
YOU TRULY SHOWED US SOMETHING GRAND.
THAT'S AMAZING!
WAY TO GO, FUNAKI-SAN!
ばん
LETTER OF RESIGNATION
(株)ホンダラ社
BUT BACK THEN, I...

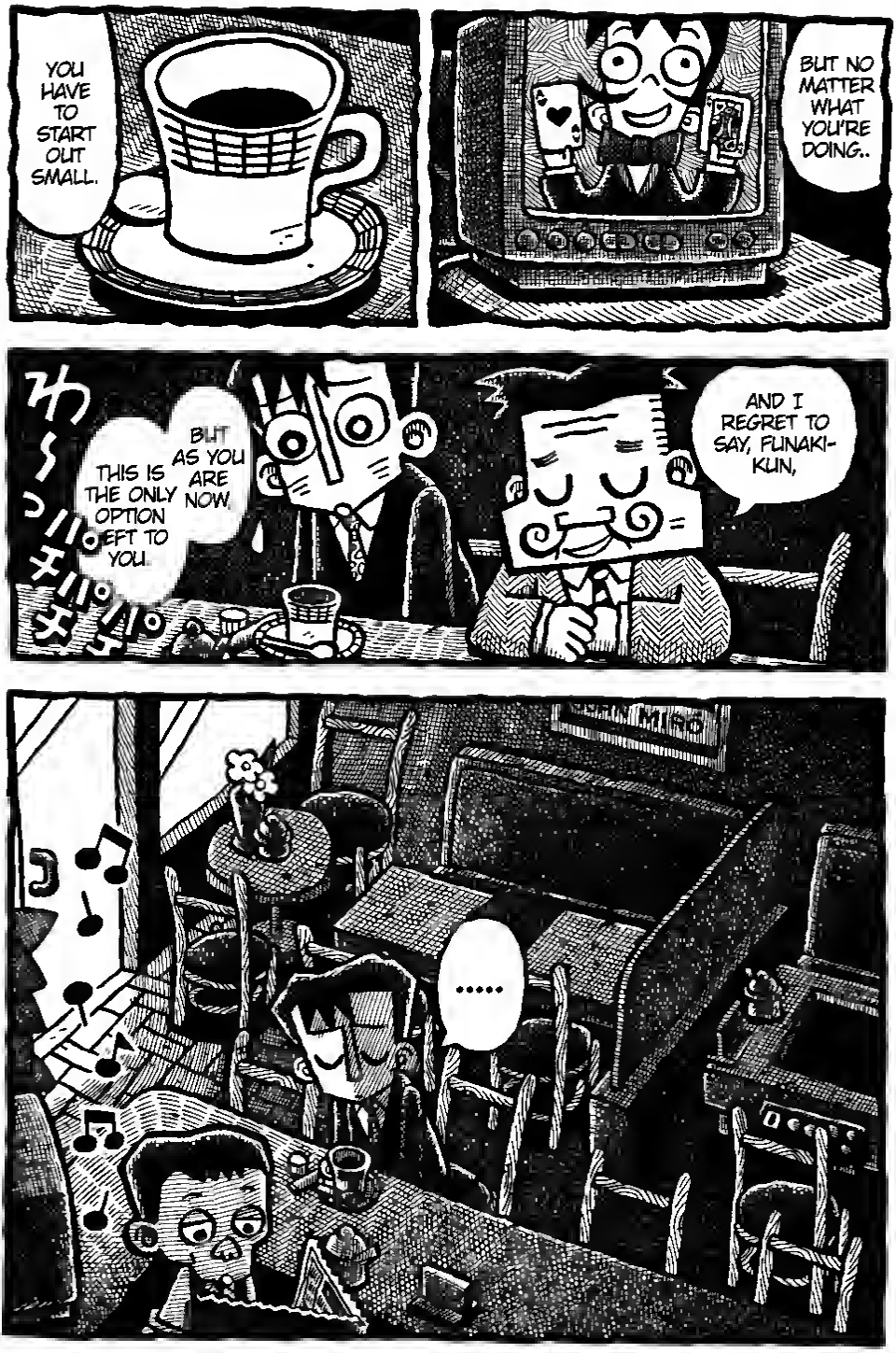
YES, SIR!
...WAS QUITE SERIOUS.
ARE YOU SERI-OUS?
YOU WANT TO BE A MAGICIAN?
MY BOSS DID NOT STOP ME.
THEY WERE ALL SUCH KIND-HEARTED PEOPLE.
MY COL-LEAGUES DID NOT STOP ME.
ぼ
ぼーん
ぼっ
ぼ

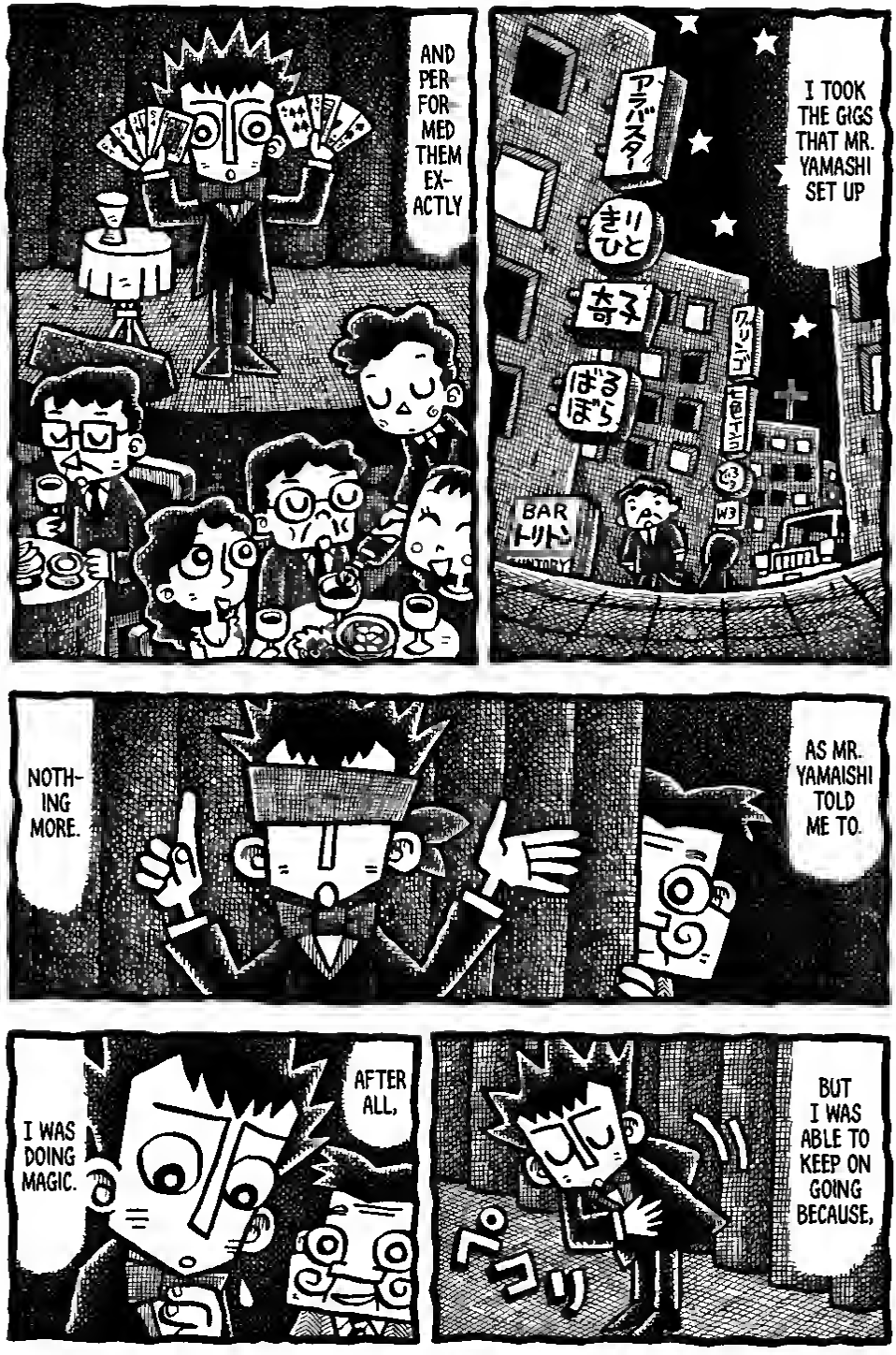
NOW,
WHAT WAS IT THAT YOU WANTED TO DO?
お茶娘
ENOUGH OF THE MAGIC!
I GET IT! I GET IT ALREADY!
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT!
I WANT TO DO MAG...
WHAT DO I...
WHEREVER I WENT,
IT WAS ALL THE SAME.
ふわぁ
スーダラプロ


THE WORK OF A MAGICIAN
ISN'T A BUSINESS OF SHOWING OFF ONE'S SKILL.
THE WORK OF A MAGICIAN
IS USING THAT SKILL TO ENTERTAIN.
WELCOME, SIR.
RELAX AND ENJOY.
It's Asparagus Fukuda!
Leading the new wave in the magical world

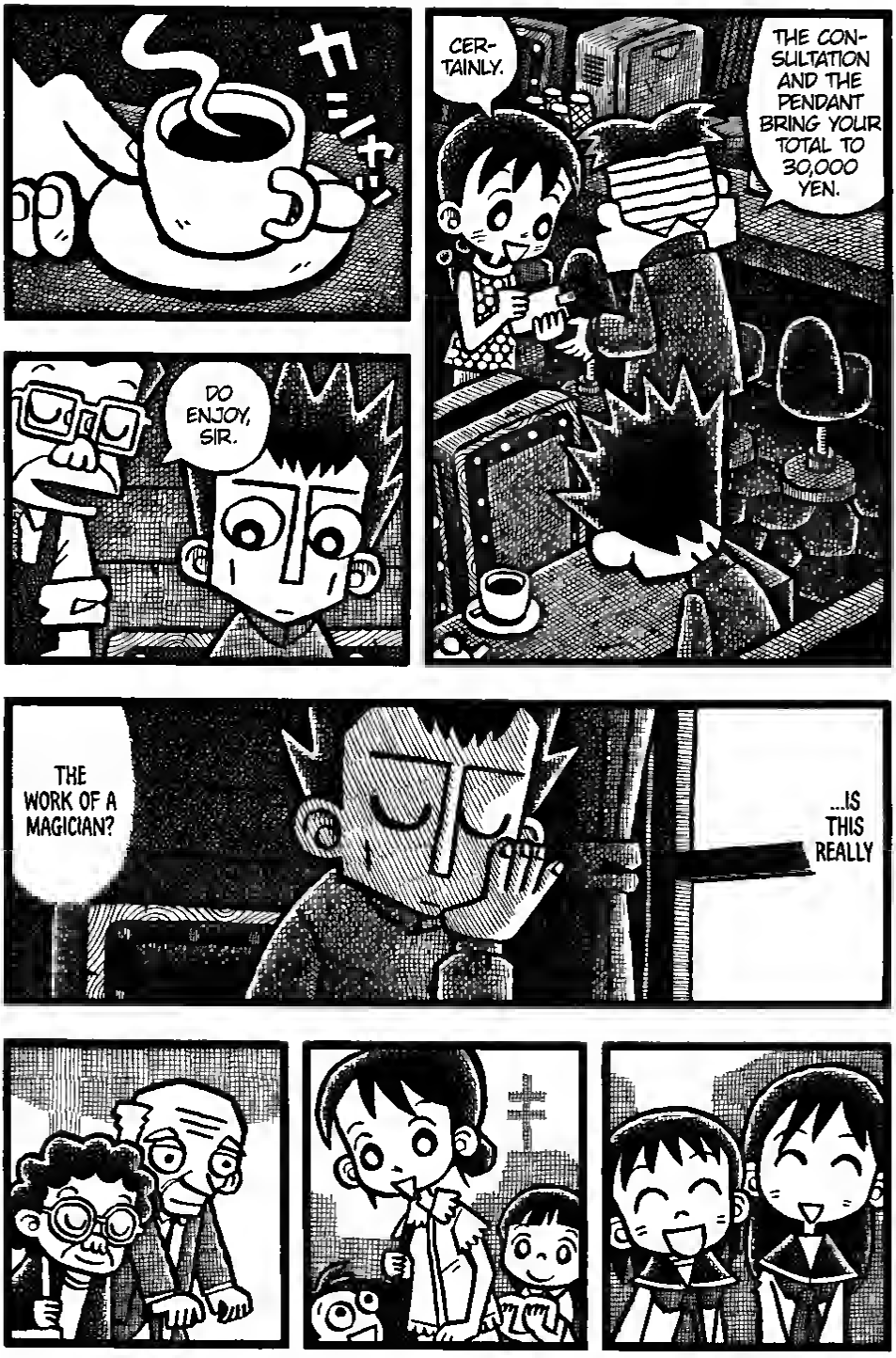
YOU TRULY SHOWED US SOMETHING GRAND.
THAT'S AMAZING!
WAY TO GO, FUNAKI-SAN!
....!!
...THE GUY FROM BACK THEN.
FUNAKI-SAN?
YOU ARE FUNAKI-SAN. YES?

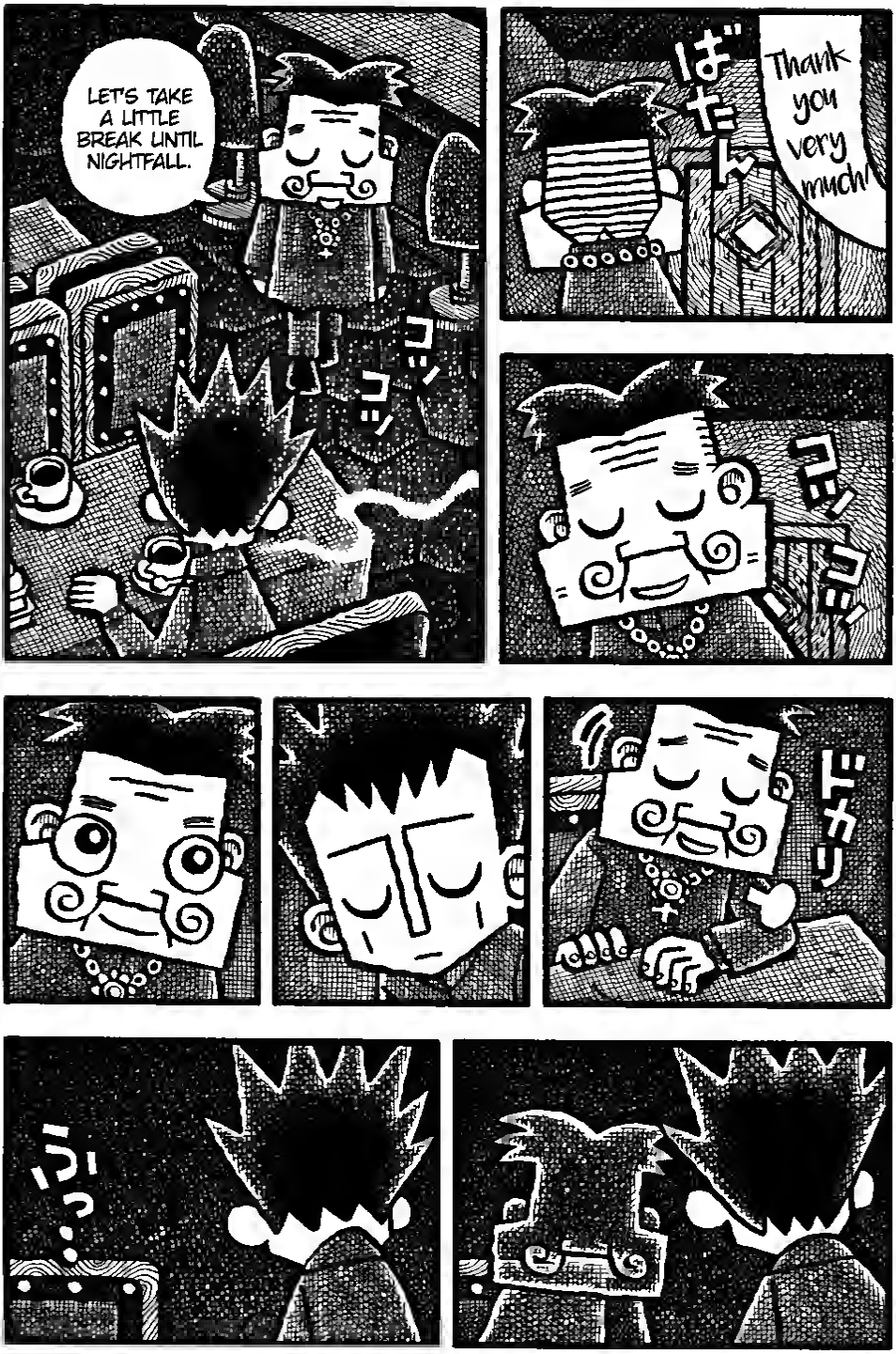
DURING YOUR RECENT AUDITION.
I HAPPENED TO BE VIEWING YOUR MAGIC
AHH, YES.
I KNEW IT WAS YOU.
AH-
HAH...
JUST LEAVE IT ALL TO ME, KID.
YAMASHI TORAZOU
MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL
IT'S DETAILED WORK.
I WON'T PROMISE YOU ANYTHING BIG.


YOU HAVE TO START OUT SMALL.
BUT NO MATTER WHAT YOU'RE DOING..
わらっちゃいかん
BUT AS YOU ARE NOW, THIS IS THE ONLY OPTION LEFT TO YOU.
AND I REGRET TO SAY, FUNAKI-KUN,
.....


AND PERFORMED THEM EXACTLY
I TOOK THE GIGS THAT MR. YAMASHI SET UP
アラバスター
きりひと
奇子
るぽぼ
BAR トリト
SUNTORY
NOTHING MORE.
AS MR. YAMAISHI TOLD ME TO.
I WAS DOING MAGIC.
AFTER ALL,
BUT I WAS ABLE TO KEEP ON GOING BECAUSE,
ポコリ

THIS CURRENT JOB.
AND CONTINUING DOWN THAT PATH HAS ALL LED UP TO...
DO SO, AND YOU SHALL BE RELEASED FROM YOUR PAST
AND SURELY BLESSED WITH A NEW FATE.
WEAR THIS
CLOSE TO YOUR SKIN AT ALL TIMES.
I-
I WILL!
THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!
AH, MISS,
THIS WAY PLEASE.
VERY WELL,
SIR...


カシャ
CER-TAINLY.
THE CON-SULTATION AND THE PENDANT BRING YOUR TOTAL TO 30,000 YEN.
DO ENJOY, SIR.
THE WORK OF A MAGICIAN?
...IS THIS REALLY


LET'S TAKE A LITTLE BREAK UNTIL NIGHTFALL.
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Thank you very much!
コン コン
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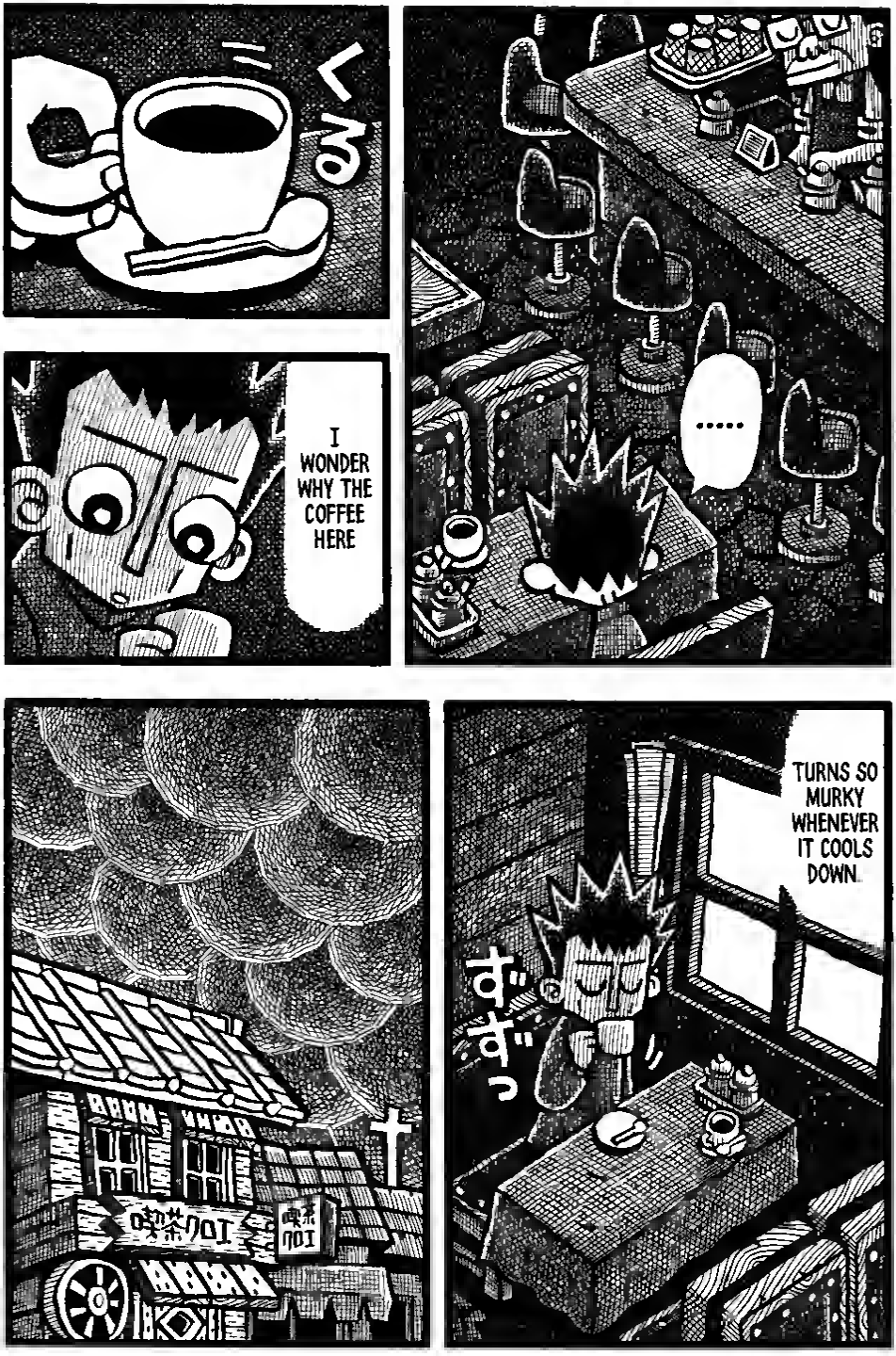
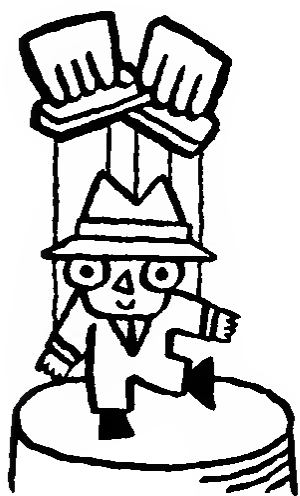
ぷぅ…


I WONDER WHY THE COFFEE HERE
.....
TURNS SO MURKY WHENEVER IT COOLS DOWN.

IN EARLY DECEMBER, I WAS WAS HOSPITALIZED WITH A HERNIATED DISK AND WAS THUS EXCUSED FROM MY END-OF-THE-YEAR CLEANING DUTIES. (ALTHOUGH THAT SAID, ALL I EVER DO IS TIDY UP MY WORK ROOM AND CLEAN THE WINDOWS ANYWAY.)

NATURALLY, I HADN'T YET RESUMED WORKING. ALL I COULD DO WAS ZONE OUT WHILE READING A BOOK OR PLAYING SOME VIDEO GAME AS MY WIFE CLEANED AND CLEANED. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.

MY WIFE REGARDED MY IDLE STATE AND SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU GO PLAY SOME PACHINKO?" I THEN REMEMBERED...



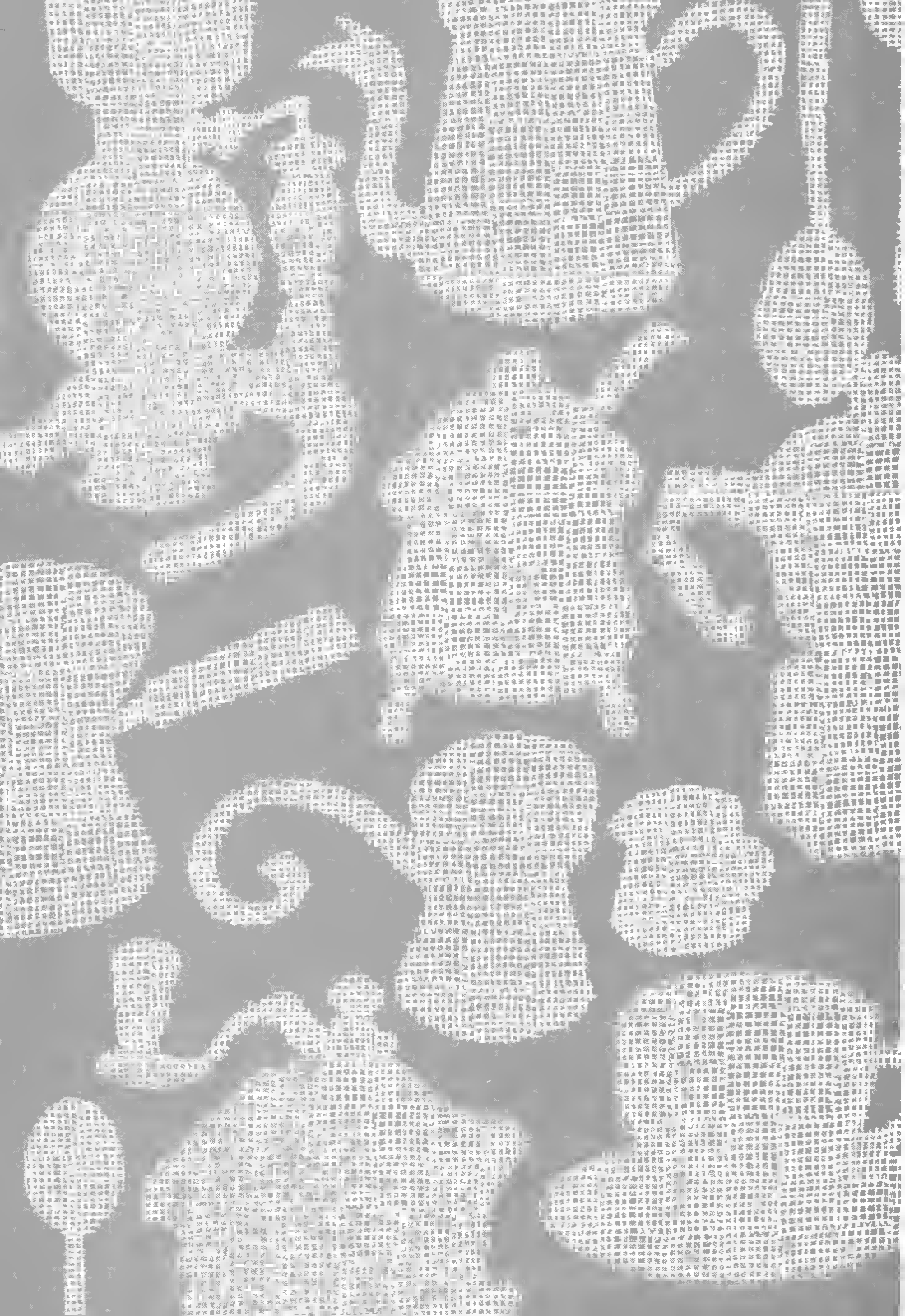
...THAT A PACHINKO PARLOR CLOSE TO THE TRAIN STATION HAD BEEN ADVERTISING THE ARRIVAL OF SOME ULTRAMAN-THEMED MACHINES. AS I LEFT FOR THE PARLOR, MY WIFE CALLED AFTER ME, "JUST DON'T LOSE MORE THAN 5,000 YEN."

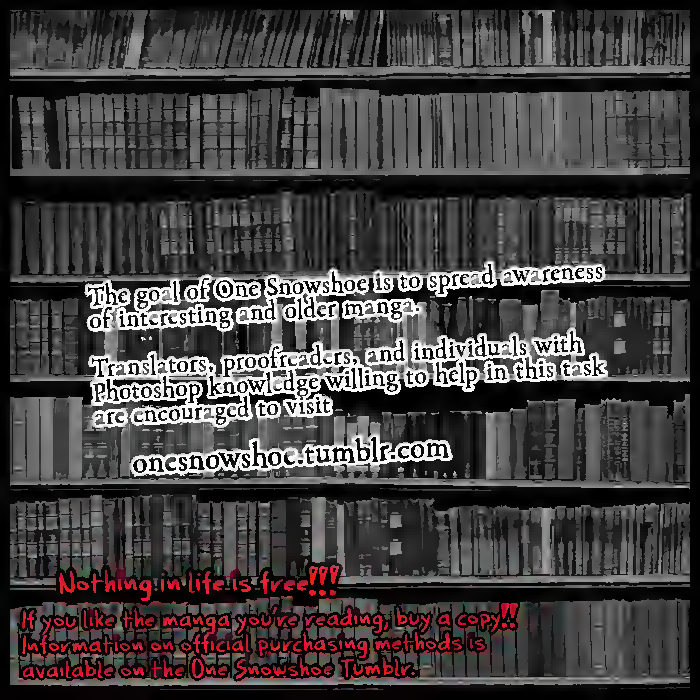
IT HAD BEEN ABOUT THREE YEARS SINCE I'D LAST PLAYED PACHINKO. THE PARLOR DIDN'T ACTUALLY HAVE VERY MANY ULTRAMAN MACHINES. MOREOVER, ONLY ONE WAS FREE.

"AHH, IT'S GOMORA!
AND NOW ALIEN BALTANS!
AND NOW THEY RELEASE PIGMON?!
WHAT COWARDICE!!"

WHEN I RETURNED HOME, I CANDIDLY REPORTED TO MY WIFE, "I LOST 10,000 YEN."

OF COURSE, SHE SCOLDED ME.
*"DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO KEEP IT UNDER 5,000 YEN?!"*

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